safeguard the country's security and national interest in accordance with our own threat perceptions.

Russian Assurance for Non Supply of Arms to Pakistan

940. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been assured by Russia that it will not supply arms to Pakistan;

(b) whether, as a part of this assurance, Russia is not supplying vital parts of its modern battle tanks, lest they may be passed on to Pakistan in a tank deal Ukraine has made with it;

(c) whether Russia is unhappy that India is delaying placing orders for modern tanks with it and a further delay may compel Russia to sell vital tank spares to Ukraine which may sell the same to Pakistan; and

(d) the reaction of Government to this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Settling Border Disputes with Neighbouring Countries

941. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the main points of border disputes of India with the neighbouring countries of Pakistan, China and Bangladesh;

(b) what are the main hurdles insettling these disputes; and

(c) what is the present position in settling these disputes, stating the initiatives contemplated by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Position regarding 'settling border disputes with neighbouring countries'.

Pakistan :

Pakistan is in illegal occupation of approximately 78,000 sq kms of Indian territory in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. In addition, Pakistan has illegally ceded approximately 5120 sq kms of Indian territory in Pakistan occupied Kashmir to China under the so-called Sino-Pak Boundary Agreement of 1963. India and Pakistan also have differences in the interpretation of the boundary in the Sir Creek area. Five rounds of discussions have taken place on this issue. The maritime boundary between the two countries has also not yet been delineated.

Government are committed to the resolution of outstanding issues between India and Pakistan peacefully, through bilateral dialogue as envisaged in the Simla Agreement. The formal official level discussions between the two countries have recently resumed. The Joint Statement issued after the second round of the resumed Foreign Secretary level discussions held in Islamabad from 19—23 June, 1997 provides the framework for a comprehensive, constructive and sustained dialogue on outstanding issues between the two countries.

China :

There are outstanding issues with regard to the India-China boundary question which have been under discussion between the two countries since the 1950s. these issues are being discussed by the two countries in the Joint Working Group established after the visit of Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi in December 1988, and the Expert Group, set up subsequent to the

visit of Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao in September 1993. The Joint Working Group has met nine times and the Expert Group has met five times.

The area under occupation by China in Jammu and Kashmir is approximately 38000 sq. km. In addition, under the so-called Sino-Pakistan 'boundary agreement' of 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded approximately 5120 sq. km. of Indian territory in pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China.

While reiterating the determination to resolve the boundary question in a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable manner, the two sides have agreed, in the interim, on concrete measures to ensure that peace and tranquillity is effectively maintained in the border areas.

Bangladesh :

The demarcation of land boundary between Bangladesh and India is still to be completed. The Indo-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement was signed in 1974. Full implementation of provisions of this Agreement requires demarcation of the boundary, and exchange of adverse possessions and enclaves. The work on identification of enclaves to be exchanged has been completed. The boundary demarcation work, along with complete identification of adverse possessions has been taken in hand by the survey authorities of India and Bangladesh. Thereafter, legal and constitutional requirements have to be fulfilled prior to the implementation of the Agreement. The areas of the boundary which are yet to be demarcated are 36 km in West Bengal, 3 km in Assam and 1.6 km in Tripura. Additionally, 155 km of fluid boundary on the rivers Sonai Ichhamati, Kalindi, Raimangal and Haribhanga in the West Bengal sector also needs to be demarcated.

Government have been holding regular discussions and field surveys incooperation with Bangladesh authorities towards completion of boundary demarcation. The last Indo-Bangladesh Boundary Conference was held in Dhaka on July 18-24, 1997.

Repatriation of Malayali Nurses from Kuwait

942. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the kerala Government has requested for the Central Government's intervention for repatriation of a large number of Malayali nurses who have taken refuge in the Indian Embassy in Kuwait;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Chief Minister of Kerala in a latter dated 31.5.97 requested the Prime Minister of India's intervention to help the nurses, who had taken shelter in the Indian Embassy premises in Kuwait following a dispute with their employers. Of the 255 nursing assistants recruited for M/s Abdul Aziz Yousef Al-Essa, Kuwait, through M/s Santosh Travels, Bombay and Manpower Agencies of Governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, 180 nursing assistance struck work and took shelter in Indian Embassy, Kuwait on 22nd May, 1997. Their main demand was that they should be paid KD 85 per month, as promised verbally at the time of recruitment, whereas they were getting KD 60 per month as per the written agreement signed by them. Government immediately instructed the Indian Ambassador in Kuwait to look into the matter. Prior to this, the Embassy had taken up the matter with the employer and the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour, Kuwait.

(c) The Indian Embassy in Kuwait made arrangements for food, shelter and medical facilities from the day the nursing assistants took shelter in the Embassy